



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Eyon Biddle, Sr., 10th District

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SUP. BIDDLE: "PUT YOUR VOTES WHERE YOUR MOUTHS ARE"

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisor Eyon Biddle, Sr., issued the following statement in response to a statement from Milwaukee Aldermen Donovan and Joe Dudzik released on Friday:

"As an elected leader and an African-American man who has grown up in Milwaukee, I've always been concerned about what's happening here. This is my home. I love this city, and I love this county. I've always tried to serve our youth. I ran for office because I live in a neighborhood where lack of wealth, education and other resources are highly common. These are some of the reasons why we have so much poverty and so much violence. I grew up in this environment. I now use government and the political process to fight the things that plague my community and to help the people in my district. There are other countless leaders, community members and organizations fighting this battle, too.

"I was surprised and disturbed to see the comments made by Aldermen Bob Donovan and Joe Dudzik regarding the recent incident at the Wisconsin State Fair. They felt the need to weigh in on critical issues regarding our community, but I never see their faces or hear their voices in our community. I'm not aware of them championing causes in our community. If they truly care about these causes, they should put their VOTES where their mouths are.

"What happened Thursday night was the type of foolishness not condoned by me, other black elected officials, or the community. This type of behavior is completely unacceptable. However, we understand the root causes and underlying reasons as to why these things happen. There is a reason why Milwaukee has one of the highest poverty rates in the country. There is a reason Milwaukee has one of the highest black unemployment rates in this country. There is a reason Milwaukee is the most segregated city in this country. There is a reason why Milwaukee's education system ranks poorly.

"I find the comments from these two aldermen disrespectful, divisive and, based on their political careers, disingenuous. They are "Johnny come lately" on issues that I have been fighting for my entire adult life. If they truly are serious about working to help solve the many issues that affect my community, they should prove me wrong and work with their elected colleagues, especially at the city level, to help tackle some of these problems.

“If I remember correctly, these gentlemen did not voice concern when Governor Walker destroyed the high speed rail, which would have created jobs for the people in my community. I didn’t see their support for the M.O.R.E ordinance that would’ve provided job creation and living wages for minorities. To my knowledge, they have not prioritized resources for youth programs or economic development for African-Americans living in low-income communities.

“True, government cannot address all of the very social ills in our community, but government DOES have the ability and the responsibility to enhance the quality of life for the people it serves. These men have not been advocates for that enhancement. These men have not promoted policies that help with job creation and economic development in the parts of this city that are heavily populated with African-Americans. Perhaps if they start voting in favor of some of these issues, then we can work together toward solving the many huge challenges that the city of Milwaukee currently faces.

“Instead, Alderman Donovan and Dudzik have done nothing but make pointless rhetoric that creates more division and incites hatred and ignorance in this city. You cannot paint the youth in my community or my city as a whole with broad strokes. There are still countless numbers of positive African-American Milwaukee youth that are trying to do the right thing. I commend them. Even if these two men don’t seem to care about them, I do.

“Many of my colleagues and I did not respond to the State Fair incident right away because we were dismayed and heartbroken by what occurred. We are all conscious of the fact that these things happen. We constantly try to find ways to reach our young people. However, often times it’s not until others outside of the African-American community are affected that others suddenly “call for action.” Violence is not a “black” thing. It affects all communities, including African-American, White, Hispanic, Hmong and Asian cultures.

“The youth that caused the violence last Thursday – and their parents – should be held responsible for what happened. That’s the bottom line.

“In the meantime, I hope that Alderman Donovan and Alderman Dudzik put their votes where their mouths are. Instead of trying to make headlines for the upcoming election year, they should first fulfill their duties as elected officials.

“We don’t need faux outrage, empty apologies, or pointless rhetoric. It’s time for these individuals to put up or shut up, but don’t run for re-election on the back of my community.”

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